



TOWER HAMLETS FEDERATION NEWS

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An organisation run by and for residents of Council or social housing properties in Tower Hamlets.

Newsletter of Tower Hamlets Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs)

Happy New Year to us all!

Tower Hamlets Federation wishes all residents of Tower Hamlets a happy and peaceful 2017.

Unfortunately, our chances of achieving happiness over the next 12 months are not great.

The Fed is a non-party political body, and the residents who play a part in our activities are members of all political parties and none. However, at the heart of our problems is the Government's Housing Strategy. The Housing Act 2016 will make truly affordable housing much more scarce in Tower Hamlets and will do nothing to meet the need in our Borough. Although the costly and unworkable "pay to stay" measure (means testing rents) has been dropped, the duty to provide "starter homes" for sale remains.

Unfortunately, the Council's Housing Strategy is a somewhat defensive document, concentrating on how to ration out what little development can be

done rather than on meeting need – which the Council, alone, does not have the powers to do.

There are also signs that the Mayor of London, who has a fair degree of power over the development of housing in the capital, is being rather hesitant over using all of them for the benefit of social housing tenants.

There's only one way to change all this: for residents to battle on, organising on the estates to help protect our futures and to keep the need for a decent supply of truly affordable, accessible housing high on the political agenda.

There, then, is your New Year's Resolution. Go to the meetings of your estate's Tenants and Residents' Association (TRA). If your estate doesn't have a TRA, start one up (we can help). Support your TRA, and it will be able to support you when you need it!

And then we can all make it at least a Happier New Year.

News in Brief

Readers may remember that most of the Borough's Registered Providers (social landlords) are part of a group called the "Housing Forum". The Fed has long argued that this is a confusing name and the body should be called the Landlords' Forum, as it only represents the views of one side of housing.

At the Council's recent Housing Strategy Conference, a representative of the Housing Forum said she could see no problem with the Housing Forum changing its name to the Landlords Forum. Alas, when the Fed chased up the change after the Conference, we were told it could not be done. The Housing Forum said a change of name would be... too confusing.

The Council's Parents and Carers Survey 2016 is open till 15th January 2017. You can use it as an opportunity to raise concerns about housing for young people and also issues such as cuts in Youth Service provision (which increases Anti-Social Behaviour on our estates).

The online survey sets several questions and restricts you to ticking one of the boxes provided.

You can take it here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TowerHamletsPCS>

Alternatively, you can set out your views in a letter and email it to Cllr Rachael Saunders, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, on: Cllr.rachael.saunders@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Federation meetings

All meetings are on the third Monday of the month, 7-9pm, Collingwood Hall, Collingwood Street, E1 5DY (Ramped entrance, no internal stairs, disabled toilet)

Next meeting: 16th January

Mike Tyrrell, recently retired Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets Community Housing, is working with One Housing Group (OHG) residents on the Isle of Dogs to set up a consultation framework for the development of OHG's four estates. How should residents be consulted? What rights to they have? What levers can they use to push their case? Mike will give us a "case study" of what OHG residents hope to do: can we use this for other estate regenerations?

Next meetings:

20th February

20th March

Speakers to be arranged.

Let us have any requests.

Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) Sub-Group

Next meetings:

7pm, Monday, 9th January

7pm, Monday, 13th February

Sidney Estate TRA office,

2 Jarman House, Jubilee St.

(Disabled toilet, level inside, high doorbell).

Open to all residents but particularly of interest to residents on LBTH estates managed by THH.